

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bolney Church of England Primary School

Vision

Be the best you can be, guided by God.

Each child is unique. We partner with families to nurture the whole child - by understanding their specific emotional, spiritual and learning needs - so children flourish.

Children leave us as fearless life-long learners - ready to meet the world with self-confidence, curiosity and resilience.

'Do for other people what you want them to do for you.' Luke 6:31

Strengths

- The school's Christian vision is deeply embedded. It is lived out by pupils and staff who thoughtfully consider how they treat each other and anybody they meet. Inspired by the vision, leaders show a strong commitment to working in partnership with families so that pupils thrive.
- Pupils, staff and families feel seen, known and understood. Relationships are strong and deep, built on the school values of love, respect, honesty and resilience. This enables pupils and adults to be bold and fearless learners who feel safe and secure to face new challenges.
- Bolney Primary is an inclusive and welcoming school. The vision ensures that uniqueness and difference are embraced and celebrated here. Pupils know they are cherished and valued whoever they are. This permeates all aspects of school life and creates a harmonious and welcoming community. Pupils and adults feel able and comfortable to 'be themselves' and express themselves.
- Pupils benefit from the rich and purposeful, vision-led partnerships. Many have been sparked by the curiosity of pupils who wanted to help and show that they care about those in need. Some of these partnerships are transformational.

Development Points

- Clarify the school's agreed language to describe spiritual development. This is so that meaningful opportunities for spiritual development are created and maximised across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the school's plans to introduce greater balance within the religious education (RE) curriculum are implemented, and their effectiveness evaluated. This is to enable pupils to experience the full breadth and challenge of a balanced curriculum.



Inspection Findings

Bolney Primary is a happy and welcoming school. The school's Christian vision is well known and understood and therefore reflected in school life. Treating others well is a priority. Staff work with families to make sure pupils flourish academically and emotionally. Pupils joyfully describe their own uniqueness. They talk about their own achievements, strengths and talents as well as celebrating those of their peers. Adults notice and capture individual 'brilliance' in creative displays within classrooms and around the school. Pupils and adults feel able and comfortable to 'be themselves' and express themselves. The vision has been carefully considered by clergy, leaders and governors from the spirituality committee who reflect on its relevance and impact. They make sure it serves their evolving community and equips pupils for life beyond the school. The vision is further expressed through four school values that guide the everyday choices and behaviours of pupils and adults. These are brought to life through the use of symbolic images, Bible verses and associated Bible stories.

Pupils at Bolney Primary School experience a pupil-centred, dynamic and innovative curriculum. Leaders have framed learning around relevant big questions, linked to their vision, that encourage purposeful reflection and foster curiosity. These include philosophical prompts such as, 'Am I too young to make a difference?' The curriculum is balanced and broad and planned to nurture the whole child. Pupils aspire to show the Bolney learning characteristics. They strive to be team players, achievers, negotiators, young leaders and change makers. Leaders have incorporated the use of therapeutic approaches across the curriculum. These have enabled pupils to explore, play and learn together in a safe and secure environment. Pupils engage enthusiastically with enrichment opportunities such as 'Hotline to Heaven', a long-running weekly club where children explore Bible stories. Pupils and adults articulate what spirituality means to them personally. However, they do not use a common language when talking about spirituality. This means that meaningful discussion about spiritual development opportunities across the curriculum are missed.

Collective worship brings the school community together. All pupils are included and supported to take part in acts of worship in ways that suit their need. The varied programme is meticulously planned and monitored by the collective worship lead who reacts quickly to any feedback. For example, leaders have looked at the timing of worship and given more opportunities for pupil responses. It provides space for prayer, stillness and reflection that continues beyond the worship time. Pupils are able to talk about the impact of collective worship, explaining that, 'You discover new things about yourself and God'. They also find it fun and exciting and enjoy opportunities to express themselves through music and drama. A recent school visit inspired pupils to recreate their own Easter service based on Stations of the Cross. This was recognised by the whole community as a special and moving time that fostered 'curiosity and wonderment'. Older pupils have the opportunity to plan and lead acts of worship. They show reverence and respect for this role. Families appreciate being invited to be part of the worship life of the school.

Inspired by the vision, pupils, staff and families treat each other well. This means they feel seen, known and understood. They express their closeness by explaining that, 'Bolney is like a family'. Relationships are strong and deep, built on the school values of love, respect, honesty and resilience. This enables pupils and adults to be bold and fearless learners who feel safe and secure to face new challenges and make mistakes. They do this knowing that they will be 'loved by God' whatever the outcome. Even the youngest pupils understand resilience and know that deeper learning and growth can, at times, come from making mistakes. Leaders give staff the space and support to innovate, adapt and improve their practice. They work as a team, supporting each other in their many



different roles. Leaders are approachable and reflective. Staff are committed to advocate for families, including those in need. They help them to identify any barriers to learning and work with other professionals to put in place adjustments needed. Support for the most vulnerable is a real strength. Many families describe the 'attuned care' they receive that allows their children to flourish, recognising that 'the extraordinary is ordinary here'.

RE is a valued subject within the curriculum and leaders understand the part it plays in encountering diversity. They have ensured that pupils experience a well-planned curriculum that teaches them about a range of religious and non-religious beliefs. RE helps pupils to explore and affirm their own views and beliefs as well as develop their understanding of others. Pupils have an unwavering appreciation of the importance of showing respect for everyone, regardless of their beliefs. Reflective, creative and engaging opportunities in RE inspire pupils to learn. Pupils also encounter lived experiences through planned visits to a wider range of places of worship. The teaching of Christianity as a global faith is enhanced by the partnerships with Haiti and Sierra Leone. Staff have benefitted from diocesan training related to providing a balanced RE curriculum. This training is only slowly being implemented in school. As a result, pupils do not experience the full breadth and challenge of a balanced curriculum.

This small school is not content to stand still. Inspired by the vision and guided by God, leaders are focussed on school improvement because they want their school to be the best it can be. They are driven to look outwards. The school enjoys a number of rich partnerships. Many have been sparked by the curiosity of pupils who wanted to help and show that they care about those in need. Leaders carefully consider the impact of these links. This ensures that every partnership is purposeful. Some of these partnerships are transformational such as the international links with Haiti and Sierra Leone. These links have provided meaningful enrichment opportunities such as the design and technology shoe bag project for a school in Sierra Leone. Leaders use the school vision to encourage pupils to 'do for other people what you want them to do for you.' Because of this they are empowered to act, especially when they notice a need or injustice and want to help others. There are multiple examples of pupil-led action for a wide range of causes. Some are related to support for those with medical needs such as diabetes or stroke charities. Others are smaller acts of kindness for individuals who are struggling to manage parts of school life. This involves pupil-led lunchtime activities such as clubs for art, reading and books, and chess club. Pupils also take on extensive leadership or ambassador roles that contribute to and influence school life. This means that pupils at Bolney School see themselves as active contributors to change.

Information

Address	Church Lane, Bolney, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5QP		
Date	22 May 2025	URN	126007
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	97
Diocese	Chichester		
Headteacher	Emma Lofthouse		
Chair of Governors	Clem Sutters		
Inspector	Paula Bliss		